

We Claim:

5 Sub B' 1. A method for providing prepaid local telephone services to a subscriber having a telecommunications device connected to a subscriber line and in communication with a telephone network via the subscriber line, the method comprising:

receiving a telephone call from the subscriber;

identifying a subscriber account in a prepaid local telephone call database for the subscriber based on the telephone number of the subscriber;

10 receiving a value identification code associated with a prepaid local telephone service program;

determining a period of service for the identified subscriber account;

monitoring the period of service at the prepaid local telephone call database; and

15 sending termination date information to the subscriber prior to an expiration of the period of service.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone call from the subscriber is received at a voice recognition unit (VRU) in communication with the prepaid local telephone call database:

20 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising sending a renewal reminder message to the subscriber prior to expiration of the period of service.

25 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising detecting the end of the period of service and sending a message to a local exchange carrier in the telephone network, the message comprising a hold order for suspending a subscriber's prepaid local telephone service.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising detecting the end of the period of service and sending a disconnect message to a local exchange carrier in the telephone network, the disconnect message comprising a disconnect order for terminating a subscriber's prepaid local telephone service.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising monitoring a grace period after sending the message to the local exchange carrier.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising detecting an end of the grace period and sending a second message to the local exchange carrier in the telephone network, the second message comprising a cancel order for canceling the subscriber's prepaid local telephone service.

8. In communication with a telephone network having at least one local exchange carrier in communication with at least one subscriber, a system for providing prepaid local telephone services comprising:

a prepaid local telephone call service center in communication with the at least one local exchange carrier, the prepaid local telephone service call service center comprising:

an applications server having a processor and a subscriber database, the subscriber database comprising subscriber service period information and subscriber identification information, the applications server further comprising means for automatically communicating service termination date information to a subscriber prior to an expiration of a service period for the subscriber.

9. The system of claim 8, further comprising means for automatically communicating a message to the local exchange carrier from the applications server upon the expiration of the service period for the subscriber.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the message comprises a hold order containing instructions to suspend a prepaid local telephone service account for the subscriber.

5 11. The system of claim 9, wherein the message comprises a disconnect order containing instructions to disconnect a prepaid local telephone service account for the subscriber.

12. The system of claim 8, further comprising a grace period timer configured to monitor a grace period, the grace period comprising a period of time after the expiration of the service period for the subscriber.

10 13. The system of claim 12, further comprising means for automatically communicating a message to the local exchange carrier upon an expiration of the grace period.

15 *subscriber* 14. A method of providing prepaid local telephone services to a subscriber having a telecommunications device connected to a subscriber line and in communication with a telephone network via the subscriber line, the method comprising:

establishing a subscriber account on a prepaid local telephone service database, the subscriber account comprising subscriber identification information and a period of service;

20 monitoring the period of service for the subscriber account at the prepaid local telephone service database; and

sending service termination information to the subscriber prior to an expiration of the period of service.

25 15. The method of claim 14, wherein establishing a subscriber account on a prepaid local telephone service database comprises:

receiving a telephone call from the subscriber;

creating a subscriber account in the database for the subscriber identified by the subscriber's telephone number;

receiving a value identification code associated with a prepaid local telephone service program;

5 determining a period of service for the identified subscriber account; and

sending a service order to a local exchange carrier for the subscriber via the telephone network.

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BY 16. A method of providing prepaid local telephone services to a subscriber having a telecommunications device connected to a subscriber line and in communication with a telephone network via the subscriber line, the method comprising:

15 establishing a subscriber account on a prepaid local telephone service database, the subscriber account comprising subscriber identification information and a period of service;

monitoring the period of service for the subscriber account at the prepaid local telephone service database;

sending a reminder message to the subscriber prior to an expiration of the period of service, and

20 sending a suspend message to the telephone network, the suspend message comprising an instruction to suspend local telephone service for the subscriber and to place the subscriber account on hold, wherein the subscriber account is maintained in an inactive state.

25 15 14 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising monitoring a grace period at the prepaid local telephone service database, the grace period comprising a predetermined length of time measured from when the suspend message is sent, and sending a disconnect message to the local exchange

carrier via telephone network after an expiration of the grace period if the subscriber has not renewed the subscriber account for an additional period of service, the disconnect message comprising an instruction to disconnect the subscriber account.

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18. ¹⁴ The method of claim 16, wherein the suspend message further comprises an instruction to permit telephone calls to an emergency telephone number, wherein the subscriber account is maintained in an inactive state and only permits the subscriber to make telephone calls to the emergency telephone number.

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19. ¹⁶ The method of claim 18, further comprising monitoring a grace period at the prepaid local telephone service database, the grace period comprising a predetermined length of time measured from when the suspend message is sent, and sending a disconnect message to the telephone network after an expiration of the grace period if the subscriber has not renewed the subscriber account for an additional period of service, the disconnect message comprising an instruction to disconnect the subscriber account.